

Always Ready to ACT

By FC2(SW) Candace Jasso

Always ready! We always hear it, but does it resonate with us? For some this motto may simply bring to mind the possibility of being called to duty at any moment, but did you ever think the call to duty could come from a Facebook post? Well, BM3 Natacha Bonilla, found herself in that very position on a late Friday evening. Recently transferred from the *USS Benfold*, BM3 Bonilla enjoys keeping in touch with friends and acquaintances from her previous command by phone and through Facebook. On one Friday evening, her routine habit of checking her Facebook page quickly escalated to a call of duty.

BM3 Bonilla couldn't believe what she was reading, "I hate my life," "I want this pain to go away," "Life isn't worth it," all posts by a leading petty officer of her previous command. The posts were followed by joking remarks from others saying, "Take me with you." BM3 Bonilla recalled the petty officer, a single mother, as a happy person always willing to give a helping hand, she knew the petty officer had a recent downturn and had been experiencing some difficulties at work and was have trouble accepting the increasing time spent away from her son. Instinctively, she knew something was wrong! Thoughts of recent suicide awareness training started coming to mind; the symptoms were matching up. She needed to act, and quickly. In acknowledging the severity of the situation BM3 Bonilla decided to voice her concern, she posted "Please think of your son, I know this isn't you speaking!" No answer came, panicked BM3 Bonilla called the petty officer's phone multiple times to no avail. Desperate to get help for the petty officer, she started reaching out to close friends who shared in her concern but did little to assist. She didn't stop there. Next she called her Boatswain's Mate Chief Petty Officer from her previous command whom she recalled with trust and admiration. The Boatswain's Mate Chief Petty Officer did not let her down. From his home at an hour close to midnight, he called the Sailor's division officer. With urgency, the division officer drove over to the petty officer's house to check on her. What happened next was just short of a miracle. The division officer arrived just in time to stop a son from losing his mother, and the Navy from losing one of our own. The petty officer was driven to Navy Medical Center San Diego for treatment. Perhaps the best phone call that BM3 Bonilla received was not from Boatswain's Mate Chief Petty Officer telling her what a wonderful thing she did, but the phone call from the petty officer saying, "Thank you for saving my life."

As much acclaim as BM3 Bonilla deserves for being the one to act, it took the efforts of a team to save a life. From the Facebook page to the hospital doors each individual successfully answered their called to duty, Hooh Yaah Shipmates! The need to answer our call of duty and to remain always ready is best left in the words of BM3 Bonilla, "A life is a life, worth more than anything or any job."

BM3 Bonilla is currently assigned to Region Legal Service Office Southwest (RLSO SW). On Jan. 21, BM3 Bonilla was recognized by CAPT A. H. Henderson, RLSO SW commanding officer, for her quick actions that directly attributed to preserving the life of this Sailor.